

Survey Shows Cat, Dog Owners Don't Know What They're Feeding Their Pets

Few pet owners read labels or understand the list of ingredients on pet food.

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Pet food nutritionists recommend reading the list of ingredients on your cat's food before feeding. Despite the world's largest pet food recall last year, a national survey released this week revealed many pet owners don't know what ingredients are in their pets' food.

The pet food survey was conducted online in August by Harris Interactive and commissioned by the Wellness brand of natural food and treats for pets. Of the 1,305 U.S. pet owners surveyed, 906 were dog owners and 783 were cat owners.

According to the survey, two-thirds of the pet owners said they feed their pets as if they were members of their families. However, 56 percent of pet owners said they always or often read the label of their own packaged foods, compared to 38 percent of dog owners and 38 percent of cat owners who said they always or often read the labels on their pets' food. Wellness also reported that only 38 percent of those surveyed said they understand all the ingredients listed on their dog food and cat food labels.

Additional findings released by Wellness include: Fifty-six percent worry their dog/cat food contains ingredients they wouldn't want their pets to consume.

More than half of dog and/or cat owners (55 percent) don't know what federal body is charged with regulating pet food quality.

When asked to name the first ingredient listed on the label of their cat's dry food, 48 percent of cat owners answered they are not sure.

When asked to name the first ingredient listed on the label of their dog's dry food, 44 percent of dog owners answered they are not sure.

The pet nutrition experts at Wellness recommended consumers pick up the bag, turn it over and study the ingredient label. Here's what Wellness suggested they look for: Real meat should be the first ingredient, not meat or poultry by-products.

Avoid commonly identified allergens (e.g. wheat, wheat gluten).

No artificial flavors, colors or preservatives should be found in the food.

Look for ingredients you do recognize, such as de-boned chicken, whole fish and wholesome fruits and vegetables.

To learn about the ingredients typically found in cat food, [click here](#).